6:Faroughy H-5 (no date)1951 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2

511 The economic status of the divers is as desperate as their [342] physical hardships. Their houses are huts which they build for 228 themselves of woven palm leaves. Wages are paid in advance through the ship owners and financed by merchants who take profits in advance of ten or twenty per cent, according to the season. In the best diving season—from June to September—the divers have little more than enough for the barest necessities; but in the winter months when cold weather and high winds seriously impede and eventually halt their work; in order to keep alive the men have to resort to borrowing at high rates [525] of interest, and so never get out of debt. As a consequence, condemned to a difficult, unhealthy and probably short life, the pearl diver is an inveterate gambler.

511 Since the abolition of the ancient Tribunal of Salifah in 228 1926, the captain of the boats has been required by law to keep 465 an account of expenses and of the advances made to the divers, [651] the taxes on which are fixed. The divers do not receive set wages, but after expenses have been deducted and the captain has taken his share of twenty per cent, the remainder is divided among the crew. The diver (*gawās*) receives twice as much as the hauler (*sib*) since his work is more dangerous. The second in command of the boat receives three parts of the profits (i.e. an amount equal to that of one diver and one hauler). He is called the Thursday, from a Persian word, probably because he is in charge of the boat on Thursdays, the captain's day off.

A comparatively recent traveler in the Near East has stated that there are occasional strikes for higher pay, though not the kind to which we are accustomed. It is the Sheik who declares the strike—and pockets the proceeds.

228 The diving season starts the middle of April and ends the middle of October. It is divided into five periods, the first of which, the *Ghaws al Bard*, begins the middle of April and lasts about a month. Deep sea fishing is not attempted and the divers relieve each other every half hour or so on account of the cold. The workers' share of the profits for this period is divided equally among the divers and the haulers because the latter have to